FEAR

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AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

NO. 21
OCTOBER

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AN ENTERTAINING COMIC

10¢

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THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! SO YOU GOT YOUR GRIMY PAWS ON A GRIMY DIME AND NOW YOU'RE READY FOR ANOTHER GRIMY VISIT INTO THE GRIMY *HAUNT OF FEAR*. WELL, DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE *LOOKIN' PALE AND SICKLY*. COME IN AND *FEEL* PALE AND SICKLY WHILE I LADLE OUT THE LATEST REEKING RECIPE FROM MY CRUDDY CAULDRON. YEP, IT'S YOUR SHIVER-CHEF, *HOSTESS* OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*, *THE OLD WITCH*, READY TO SERVE THE TASTY TALE OF TERROR ENTITLED...

AN OFF-COLOR HEIR

LAURA RAIS STOOD BEFORE THE IMPOSING PORTRAIT, THE TEARS STREAMING DOWN HER FACE, HER NERVOUS FINGERS TIGHTLY CLUTCHING THE BOTTLE AND THE SMALL WAD OF COTTON. SHE STARED IN HORROR AT THE SOMBER FACE ON THE OLD CANVAS WITH ITS DARK FOREBODING EYES AND ITS UNRULY WHITE BEARD.

LAURA LOOKED AROUND WILDLY, HER GLANCE FELL UPON THE COFFEE TABLE BEHIND HER. SHE BENT AND PLACED THE BOTTLE OF COLORLESS LIQUID AND THE WAD OF COTTON UPON IT AND DRAGGED IT TO THE FIREPLACE OVER WHICH THE PORTRAIT HUNG ..

GABR.. GASP...

LAURA WAS FRIGHTENED. HER BREATH CAME IN SHORT CHOKING PANTS AND HER HEART BEAT MADLY IN HER HEAVING CHEST. SHE PICKED UP THE BOTTLE AND THE COTTON AND CLIMBED UP ONTO THE COFFEE TABLE...

SHE STOOD THERE, HESITANTLY, STARING AT THE PORTRAIT. THE BEARDED FACE STARED BACK AT HER WITH ANGRY EVIL EYES...

HER EYES FELL TO THE NEATLY ENGRAVED NAME-PLATE FASTENED TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PORTRAIT'S FRAME...

'BARON GILLES DE RAIS.' WHY DOES IT SOUND SO *FAMILIAR?* WHO *IS* IT? I'VE *GOT* TO FIND *OUT!*

LAURA TIPPED THE BOTTLE AND POURED ITS CONTENTS UPON THE WAD OF COTTON. THE FAMILIAR SMELL OF THE COLORLESS LIQUID DRIFTED UPWARD...

THE FAMILIAR SMELL. IT BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES. THE CLUTTERED STUDIO IN GREENWICH VILLAGE IN NEW YORK. THE STRUGGLING YEARS OF STUDY AND HARD WORK AND LAURA'S FIRM DETERMINATION...

SOMEDAY I'LL *BE* A *SUCCESSFUL* PORTRAIT *PAINTER*, SOMEDAY I'LL BE *FAMOUS!*

THE MEMORIES OF LAURA'S PAST SWEPT BEFORE HER EYES. THE DAY *GILBERT RAIS* CAME TO HER STUDIO...

MY NAME IS *RAIS*, MISS HARPER. *GILBERT* RAIS. I'M FROM *LOUISIANA*. I'VE COME TO NEW YORK TO HAVE MY *PORTRAIT* PAINTED. A *MUTUAL FRIEND RECOMMENDED YOU...*

LAURA REMEMBERED THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED. THOSE WONDERFUL WEEKS OF GILBERT POSING FOR HER, WHILE SHE MOULDED HIS LIKENESS IN OILS AND SPREAD IT UPON HER CANVAS

THAT WILL BE *ALL* FOR *TODAY*, MR. RAIS. THE LIGHT IS FADING

I WAS WONDERING, MISS HARBER' MAY I TAKE YOU TO DINNER?

...THE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION THAT SOON BECAME MORE THAN JUST THAT THOSE WONDERFUL DAYS OF PAINTING HIS PORTRAIT, AND THOSE WONDERFUL NIGHTS... DINING TOGETHER... DANCING TOGETHER... AND FALLING IN LOVE

TOMORROW YOUR PORTRAIT WILL BE *FINISNED*, GILBERT.. AND YOU WILL BE GOING *SOUTN* AGAIN.

COME *WITN* ME, LAURA. COME TO *LOUISIANA* WITH ME BE MY *WIFE*..

GILBERT' ARE YOU *PROPOSING*?

I HAVE A *HUGE MANSION* DOWN IN THE *LOUISIANA BAYOUS*, LAURA. YOU'LL *LOVE* IT THERE. *SAY* YOU'LL *MARRY ME!*

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D MADE UP HER MIND. THREW AWAY HER DREAMS OF A CAREER AS A PORTRAIT PAINTER... AND ACCEPTED GILBERT'S PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

YES, GIL, DARLING *YES... I'LL MARRY YOU!*

LAURA. SWEET

...THE SIMPLE CEREMONY UNITING LAURA AND GILBERT RAIS MAKING THEM ONE.. MAKING THEM MAN AND WIFE...

...THE WONDROUS AIRPLANE TRIP SOUTH LOOKING DOWN AS THE COUNTRY SWEPT BY BELOW THEM LIKE SOME FAIRY CARPET

HAPPY, DARLING?

DELIRIOUS, GIL

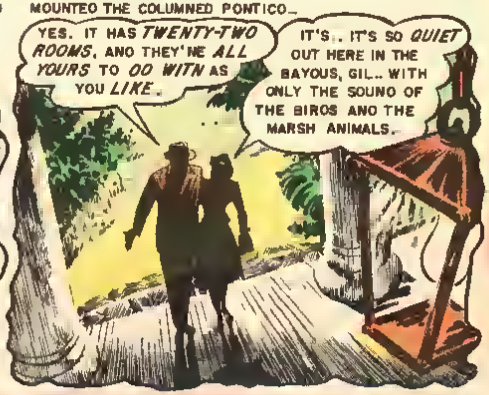
AND THEN LAURA REMEMBERED THE SEEMINGLY UNENDING AUTO TRIP OUT OF NEW ORLEANS INTO THE SILENT MYSTERIOUS BAYOUS... THE MILES AND MILES THROUGH MOSS-LADEN CYPRESS TREES, TILL FINALLY...

WELL *THERE* SHE *IS*, LAURA! *'TIFFANGES'!* THE *FAMILY PLANTATION HOUSE*..

OH, GIL! IT'S... *BEAUTIFUL!*

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D FELT WHEN SHE'D FIRST SEEN 'TIFFANGES.' SHE REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D SHIVERED AS IT LOOMED UP BEFORE THEM, STARK WHITE AND DISMAL-LOOKING, WITH AN AIR OF MYSTERY ABOUT IT..

SHE REMEMBERED HOW GILBERT HAD SMILED AS THEY'D MOUNTED THE COLUMNED PORTICO..



..HOW THE LOOK HAD COME INTO HIS EYES..

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW THE SIGHT OF THE HUGE LIVING ROOM WITH ITS PRICELESS ANTIQUES HAD ALMOST TAKEN HER BREATH AWAY. SHE REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D FLITTED ABOUT LIKE A LITTLE CHILD TOUCHING EACH EXQUISITE PIECE OF FURNITURE, HER FEARS OUTSIDE FORGOTTEN..

AND THEN SHE REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D STOPPED...STUNNED...AND THE FEARS RETURNED...AS SHE CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE PORTRAIT OVER THE FIRE-PLACE..

...THE PORTRAIT...THE FRIGHTENING FACE WITH ITS DARK EVIL EYES AND THE COARSE WHITE BEARD. THERE WAS SOMETHING *ABOUT* IT...

THERE WAS SOMETHING *STRANGE* ABOUT THAT OLD PORTRAIT...SOMETHING ABOUT THE FINELY-CRACKED CANVAS AND THE METICULOUSLY-PAINTED FACE AND THE COARSE WHITE BEARD..

LAURA REMEMBERED THOSE FIRST FEW WEEKS AT 'TIFFANGES'...THE JOY OF BEING ALONE WITH GIL, HER NEW HUSBAND. AND THEN, ONE DAY...

GIL! YOU'RE *PACKING!* WHERE ARE YOU *GOING?*

IT TAKES *MONEY* TO REFURNISH A HOUSE LIKE THIS, DARLING. I'VE GOT TO MAKE A *BUSINESS TRIP!* CHECK MY *INTERESTS!*

HOW LONG WILL YOU BE *GONE*, GIL?

NOT LONG, DEAR. A *FEW DAYS. YOU'LL* HAVE LOTS TO DO. GO THROUGH THE *HOUSE*, OPEN UP ALL THE *ROOMS*. HERE ARE THE KEYS...

DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO *DECORATE* EACH ROOM. THAT OUGHT TO KEEP YOU BUSY TILL I GET BACK.

ALL RIGHT, GIL. BUT HURRY, WON'T YOU. I...I HATE TO BE ALONE..

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D WATCHED FROM THEIR BEDROOM WINDOW AS GIL WAVED AND DROVE OFF DOWN THE CYPRESS-LINED BAYOU ROAD...

... HOW THE SILENCE SEEMED TO CLOSE IN AROUND HER... AND NOW THAT STRANGE FEELING, THAT *FEAR*, SUDDENLY SEEMED TO GRIP HER. SHE'D STARED DOWN AT THE KEYS...

WELL.. NO USE SITTING AROUND *MOPING!* MIGHT AS WELL *EXPLORE* MY NEW HOME!

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D GONE FROM ROOM TO ROOM, UNLOCKING EACH DOOR, AND GASPING WITH PLEASANT SURPRISE...

HOW EXQUISITE. I WOULDN'T WANT TO CHANGE A THING IN THIS ROOM. NOT A *STICK*. IT'S ..IT'S *LOVELY*.

IN FACT.. *EVERY* ROOM IS LOVELY.

...AND THEN, LAURA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D COME TO THE ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL ON THE VERY TOP FLOOR OF THE OLD MANSION...

THAT'S FUNNY. NONE OF THESE KEYS *FIT* THIS LOCK...

THE MYSTERIOUS ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL ON THE TOP FLOOR. LAURA REMEMBERED THE FRUSTRATION AT NOT BEING ABLE TO UNLOCK THE DOOR THE NATURAL CURIOSITY THAT GREW WITHIN HER...

TWENTY-ONE! TWENTY-TWO! *TWENTY-THREE!* THERE ARE TWENTY-*THREE* ROOMS IN THIS HOUSE. BUT, *GILBERT SAID* THERE WERE ONLY TWENTY-*TWO!* I WONDER *WHY!* I WONDER WHAT'S IN *THIS* ROOM THAT HE WANTS TO *HIDE!*

AND SHE REMEMBERED SULKING DOWN INTO THE LIVING-ROOM AND STARING UP AT THE PORTRAIT OF THE MAN WITH THE DARK FOREBODING EYES AND THE MATTEO WHITE BEARD AND FEELING THAT CHILL ENCLOSE HER...MAKING HER *SHIVER*

WHAT *IS* THERE ABOUT THAT PAINTING THAT SEEMS SO *STRANGE?* IS IT THE *FACE?* THE *NAME?* '*BARON GILLES DE RAIS*' IS THAT *NAME FAMILIAR?*

AND LAURA REMEMBERED HOW HER FEARS INCREASED...HOW HER LONELINESS MADE HER NERVOUS...AND THE SOUNDS AT NIGHT, KEEPING HER AWAKE, MAKING HER THINK...ABOUT THE ROOM WITHOUT A KEY... THE PAINTING...

...AND FINALLY, THE RELIEF WHEN GILBERT RETURNED...

OH, GILBERT. I...SOB...I MISSED YOU!

HOW ARE YOU DARLING? WELL, DID YOU DECIDE ABOUT THE REDECORATING?

EVERYTHING IS *PERFECT* GILBERT I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE A THING! OH, ER... BUT THERE'S *ONE* ROOM I DIDN'T SEE. YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME THE KEY

THAT ROOM IS *NOT YOURS!* THAT ROOM IS *MINE!* KEEP *OUT* OF IT!

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW GILBERT'S EYES GREW DARK LIKE THE EYES IN THE PORTRAIT...

BUT... *WHY*, GILBERT? WHAT ARE YOU *HIDING?*

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! JUST *STAY AWAY FROM THAT ROOM.* YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU *LIKE* WITH THE *OTHERS.* BUT *STAY AWAY* FROM *THAT* ONE.

AND LAURA REMEMBERED HOW THE NEXT MORNING, GILBERT DID NOT SHAVE.

BUT, YOU'RE SO *SEEDY-LOOKING,* GILBERT!

I'M *GROWING* A *BEARD,* LAURA. I REALLY *HATE* TO *SHAVE. SO,* UNTIL MY *NEXT BUSINESS TRIP...*

LAURA REMEMBERED HOW STRANGE EVERYTHING WAS AFTER THAT. HER NERVOUSNESS, HER CURIOSITY ABOUT THE ROOM. GILBERT'S BEARD, BLACK AND SILKY, GROWING THICKER EACH DAY, UNTIL...

I HAVE TO GO ON ANOTHER BUSINESS TRIP TOMORROW, LAURA

OH?

THE ROOM. THE PORTRAIT. WHAT WAS THERE THAT BOTHERED LAURA? SHE REMEMBERED GOING THROUGH GILBERT'S POCKETS THAT NIGHT.. AND FINDING THE KEY..

..THE KEY TO THE ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL ON THE TOP FLOOR!

WHEN LAURA'D AWAKENED THE NEXT MORNING GILBERT WAS GONE. SHE'D HURRIED TO THE BATHROOM, TORTURED WITH BITING CURIOSITY...

NOW I'LL *SEE* WHAT'S IN THAT ROOM. I... I..

SHE'D STARED DOWN AT THE BOTTLE ON THE SINK

WHAT'S *THIS*? 'BLACK DYE'! 'TINTS GREYING HAIR BLACK'! OH, *NO!*

LAURA'D LAUGHED.. SO GILBERT WAS GETTING GREY AND HE WAS DYING HIS HAIR SHE'D *LAUGHED* AT HIS BOYISHNESS, KEEPING SECRETS..

THE POOR DEAR...

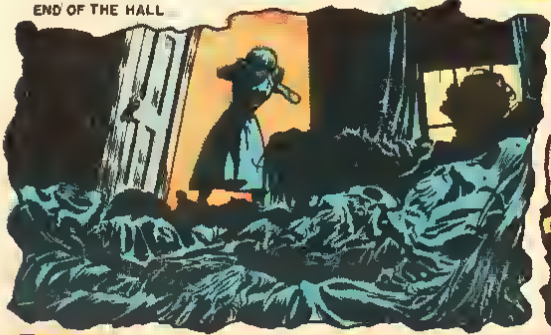
DYE

SHE'D DRESSED QUICKLY AND RUSHED TO THE TOP FLOOR — TO THE DOOR AT THE END OF THE HALL. SHE'D INSERTED THE KEY NERVOUSLY — TURNED THE LATCH —

— AND SWUNG OPEN THE DOOR..AND *SCREAMED*

E-E-E-E-E-E-E

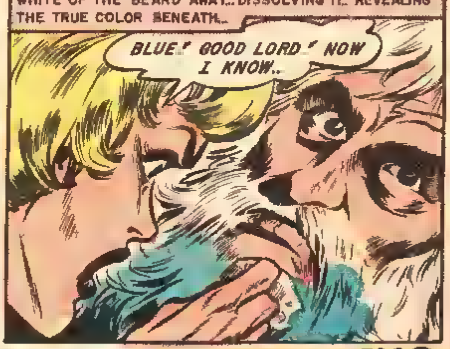
SEVEN BODIES! SEVEN BODIES OF *WOMEN*, IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DECAY, THEIR THROATS SLIT, LAY BEFORE HER IN THAT HORRIBLE LITTLE ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL...



SHE'D RUN, CRYING, FROM THE GORY SIGHT. AND THEN SHE'D THOUGHT OF THE BOTTLE OF BLACK DYE IN THE BATHROOM...

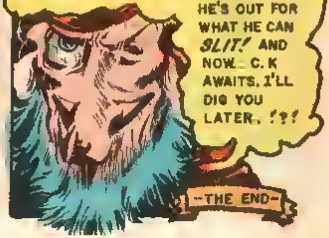
LAURA STOOD UPON THE COFFEE TABLE BEFORE THE PORTRAIT, INHALING THE FUMES FROM THE TURPENTINE IN HER HAND...

SAVAGELY, LAURA SMEARED THE TURPENTINE-SOAKED WAD OF COTTON ACROSS THE PORTRAIT SMEARING THE WHITE OF THE BEARD AWAY... DISSOLVING IT. REVEALING THE TRUE COLOR BENEATH...



SHE SPUN AROUND. GILBERT STOOD THERE, GRINNING THE TRUE COLOR OF *HIS* BEARD, *TOO*, HAD BEEN REMOVED. THE RAZOR GLISTENED IN HIS HAND.

AND SO, OUR TASTY TIDBIT ENDS, FIENDS, IN A.. HEE, HEE... *CUTTING CLIMAX*. AND LIKE HER SEVEN PREDECESSORS, LAURA, TOO, ENDED UP IN THE LITTLE ROOM AT THE END OF THE HALL ON THE TOP FLOOR AS FOR GILBERT, THE MODERN-DAY BLUEBEARD, HE'S TRAVELING AROUND THE COUNTRY AGAIN, LOOKING FOR NUMBER *NINE* FOR HIS COLLECTION. SO... IF A GUY WITH A *5 O'CLOCK BLUE SHADOW* PROPOSES, GIRLS, *BEWARE!* HE'S OUT FOR WHAT HE CAN *SLIT!* AND NOW... C. K AWAITS. I'LL DIG YOU LATER. !?!



—THE END—

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! NOW THAT THE OLD *HAG* HAS *BORED YOU* WITH HER *SISSY-SCREAM-SCOOPINGS*, IT'S TIME FOR A *REAL TERROR TALE*. SO *CREEP* INTO THE *CRYPT OF TERROR, CRUMBS*, AND YOUR *HOST IN HOWLS, THE CRYPT-KEEPER* WILL *CURDLE* YOUR *BLOOD* AND *SHIVER* YOUR *SPINE* WITH *ANOTHER CHILLER-DILLER* FROM MY *MOLDY COLLECTION*. I *CALL* THIS *EERIE ADVENTURE* INTO THE *HAUSEATING*...

DIG THAT CAT... HE'S REAL GONE!

ULRIC, THE UNDYING, BOWED STIFFLY TO THE CHEERING CROWD, AND STEPPED GINGERLY INTO THE SATIN-LINED CASKET THAT RESTED, SUSPENDED, OVER THE YAWNING TEN-FOOT-DEEP PIT. A HUSH FELL OVER THE GATHERING OF THE CURIOUS THAT HAD COME TO WITNESS ULRIC'S LATEST SKIRMISH WITH DEATH. A VOICE ECHOED OVER A LOUDSPEAKER

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. *ULRIC, THE UNDYING*, IS GETTING *INTO THE COFFIN* NOW. IN A MOMENT, ITS *LID* WILL BE *SEALED* AND IT WILL BE *LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE*...

ULRIC RECLINED IN THE COFFIN, THE LID WAS CLOSED, AND THE COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE YAWNING EXCAVATION. THE VOICE COMING OVER THE P. A. SYSTEM RASPED ON, DESCRIBING THE ACTION FOR THOSE WHO COULD NOT SEE...

THE *GRAVE DIGGERS* ARE STEPPING *FORWARD*, FOLKS. THEY'RE SHOVELING THE *EARTH* BACK INTO THE GRAVE .. *COVERING THE COFFIN*...

ULRIC
UNDYING

LYING IN THE DARKNESS, AMONG THE SATIN FOLDS THAT SURROUNDED HIM, ULRIC, THE UNDYING LAUGHED AS HE LISTENED TO THE VOICE FAN ABOVE HIM AND THE BOOMING SOUND OF THE EARTH STRIKING THE COFFIN-LID...
...EXPERTS CALCULATE THAT A MAN SEALED INTO THAT COFFIN WOULD SUFFOCATE WITHIN AN HOUR, FOLKS. ULRIC WILL REMAIN BURIED FOR THREE HOURS...
HEH, HEH... AND WHEN THEY DIG ME UP, THEY WILL EXAMINE ME, AND PRONOUNCE ME DEAD...
...BUT I WILL LIVE AGAIN... RETURN FROM THE DEAD AGAIN AS I HAVE RETURNED FROM THE DEAD BEFORE. AND THIS... THIS WILL BE MY FAREWELL PERFORMANCE. THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME I WILL RETURN. IT IS THE LAST TIME I CAN RETURN...
'I REMEMBER HOW IT ALL BEGAN. HOW HE STOOD OVER ME AS I LAY DRUNK IN A DOORWAY OR SKID ROW, A DERELICT... A DOWN-AND-OUTER...'
WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
NONE O' YER BUSINESS...
'...HOW HE BENT CLOSE TO ME... WHISPERING...'
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE RICH? RICHER THAN YOU EVER DREAMED...
G'WAN... SCRAM... LE'ME BE... LE'ME...
'...HOW HE FED ME COFFEE UNTIL HE SOBERED ME UP. THEN TOLD ME HIS WILD STORY...'
MY NAME IS DOCTOR EMIL MANFRED. I AM READY TO ASTOUND THE WORLD WITH MY DISCOVERY... THE DISCOVERY THAT WILL MAKE US BOTH RICH...
WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, DOC?
I HAVE DISCOVERED HOW TO CHEAT DEATH, MY FRIEND... HOW TO DIE... AND THEN TO LIVE AGAIN... NOT JUST ONCE, BUT MANY TIMES!
DIE... AND LIVE AGAIN? I DON'T GET IT!
YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE SUPERSTITION REGARDING THE COMMON ALLEY CAT? THE SUPERSTITION THAT A CAT HAS NINE LIVES? WELL, I HAVE DISCOVERED THE CAT'S SECRET, MY FRIEND.
WHAT?! YOU MEAN...
ICH
2

YES! I CAN GIVE YOU TNE MULTIPLE LIVES OF A CAT! I KNOW NOW! THINK WHAT THAT COULD MEAN!
GOOD LORD!
WITH A CAT'S AGILITY TO RETURN FROM THE DEAD TIME AND AGAIN, YOU COULD DEFY DEATH.. BECOME FAMOUS.. GIVE EXHIBITIONS THAT WOULD MAKE US RICH...
HOW, DOC? HOW CAN YOU DO IT?
IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER, MY FRIEND. AN OPERATION. .REMOVING A CERTAIN GLAND FROM A COMMON CAT AND PLACING IT IN YOUR GODY. ARE YOU WILLING?
I DON'T KNOW...
'I REMEMBER HOW I FINALLY CONSENTED TO THE OPERATION I REMEMBER LYING IN DOCTOR MANFRED'S LABORATORY, UPON A WHITE TABLE... WATCHING THE CAT WE'D CAPTURED SQUIRM BESIDE ME...'
ARE YOU READY?
READY, DOC...
'I REMEMBER THE SICKENING SMELL OF THE ETHER... THE CAT'S SHRILL SCREAM AS I SLIPPED INTO OBLIVION AND THEN... WAKING...
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
ALL RIGHT, I GUESS! WAS...WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?
'I REMEMBER HOW DOCTOR MANFRED NODDED AT THE STIFF SILENT FORM OF THE CAT ON THE OPERATING TABLE BESIDE ME...'
THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS, MY FRIEND. YOU NOW NAVE THE MULTIPLE LIVES OF THAT POOR CAT...
HOW..HOW CAN I BE SURE?
'...HOW DOCTOR MANFRED LIFTED THE GUN...POINTED IT AT MY CHEST...'
A SNOT FROM THIS CLOSE RANGE IS CERTAIN DEATN, MY FRIEND!
NO! WAIT! NO...

'I REMEMBER THE EXPLOSION...THE SEARING PAIN AS THE BULLET ENTERED MY CHEST...TORE INTO MY HEART..'
GGNNNNNNNNN...
'I REMEMBER THE BLACKNESS CLOSING IN AROUND ME ..AND THEN LIFTING...'
WELCOME BACK TO LIFE...ULRIC!
ULRIC?!
ULRIC, THE UNDYING! THAT'S WHAT WE WILL CALL YOU. YOU WERE KILLED BY THAT BULLET, ULRIC! BUT NOW YOU HAVE RETURNED...TO START ANOTHER LIFE!
THEN ONE OF THE LIVES WAS USED UP!
EXACTLY! BUT WE WILL WASTE NO MORE. FROM NOW ON, WE WILL MAKE EACH OF YOUR LIVES PAY...AND PAY WELL!
ULRIC, THE UNDYING! I LIKE IT! WHEN DO WE START...
'I REMEMBER THE FIRST SPECTACLE. I'D ANNOUNCED THAT I WOULD GO OVER NIAGARA FALLS...WITHOUT A BARREL...AND LIVE. I REMEMBER THE RUSHING NIAGARA RIVER, SWEEPING PAST THE CROWDS THAT LINED THE SHORE...SWEEPING ME TO THE BRINK AND OVER...'
THERE HE GOES...
IT'LL KILL HIM... SURE!
THE FOOL!
'I REMEMBER THE MONTHS I SPENT RECOVERING .. WAITING FOR BONES TO MEND...'
LISTEN TO THIS, DOC. ULRIC DEFIES CERTAIN DEATH. SWIMS OVER FALLS AND LIVES! EARNS THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN WAGERS AND ADMISSIONS!
WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW, ULRIC, IS THAT YOU DID DIE! THIS IS ANOTHER LIFE YOU ARE LIVING... YOUR THIRD. YOU HAVE USED TWO!
NEWS
'I REMEMBER MY SECOND SPECTACLE. I'D ANNOUNCED I WOULD LEAP FROM A PLANE FLYING AT TWO THOUSAND FEET...WITHOUT A PARACHUTE.. AND LIVE. I REMEMBER STEPPING INTO SPACE OVER THE FIELD WHERE THE CROWDS HAD GATHERED...'
CRAZY IDIOT!
THIS TIME HE'S GONE TOO FAR...
ULRIC THE UNDYING

'MONE MONTHS.. WAITING FOR BROKEN BONES TO KNIT... TORN FLESH TO HEAL...'

HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE *THIS* TIME, DOC?

ALL TOLD.. *FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS!* HENE'S *YOUR* SHARE *TWENTY-EIGHT GRAND*...

'I'D TAKEN A SLUG IN MY CHEST, I'D GONE OVER NIAGARA FALLS, AND I'D LEAPED FROM A PLANE FON A TOTAL OF EIGHTY-SIX GRAND. I'D USED UP *THREE* OF MY *NINE* LIVES. I'D BUFFENED THE FEAR AND THE PAIN. BUT THE DOC, WHO ONLY WATCHED, TOOK *HALF THE DOUGH.* SO I MADE UP MY MIND..'

ULRIC! SLOW DOWN! YOU'RE DRIVING TOO FAST!

I'M GOING TO MAKE AN *INVESTMENT,* DOC! I'M GOING TO INVEST MY *FOURTH LIFE* FON *100%* OF OUN *PARTNERSHIP!* I'LL *STILL* HAVE *FIVE LIVES LEFT!*

'I REMEMBEN THE DOC'S FACE AS I DNOVE THE CAN OFF THE CLIFF.. THE HONROR UPON IT... AND THEN, AS WE HIT, THE SUDDEN SMILE THAT BPNEAD ACROSS IT..'

'DOC DIED INSTANTLY. I REVIVED. I WAS NOW IN MY *FIFTH LIFE.* BUT I COULDN'T FONGET THAT SMILE. I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND. AFTER I'D BEEN DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL, I ANNOUNCED TO THE NEWSPAPERS..'

I WILL ALLOW MYSELF TO BE *TIED UP IN A SACK, WEIGHTED DOWN,* AND *DROPPED INTO THE RIVER* FON *SIX HOURS.* I AM WILLING TO TAKE *ALL BETS* THAT IT WILL NOT *KILL ME.*

'MY *FIFTH* LIFE LEFT ME IN THE FORM OF TINY BUBBLES THAT NOSE UPWARD TO THE SUNFACE AS I LAY IN THE MUD OF THE RIVER-BED. TIED IN A BURLAP SACK.'

'BEFONE MY NIVEN SPECTACLE, DOC HAD TAKEN *CARE* OF MY REVIVALS. .MY NETURNINGS. WHEN THEY HAULED ME UP AND EXAMINED ME..'

HE'S DEAD!

SEND HIM TO THE *MORGUE*...

'..DOC WASN'T *AROUND* TO TAKE MY "CORPSE" *AWAY.* LUCKILY, I "CAME TO" IN MY *SIXTH* LIFE JUST BEFORE THEY DRAINED THE *BLOOD* FROM MY *BODY..*'

HEY!

WHAT THE...? CHOKE...

ULRIC, THE UNDYING, GRINNED AS HE LAY AMONG THE SATIN FOLDS IN THE COFFIN, TEN FEET UNDER THE GROUND.

THAT'S WHY DOC SMILED JUST AS HE DIED! HE THOUGHT THEY'D EMBALM ME AND I'D BE FINISHED...UNABLE TO 'RETURN'! WELL, I WAS LUCKY... AND THE NEXT TIME, I MADE ARRANGEMENTS...

'I HIRED AN ATTENDANT...'

AS SOON AS I'M DECLARED DEAD, BRING MY BODY BACK HERE AND PUT IT IN BED. I'LL COME AROUND AFTER A WHILE. UNDERSTAND, SAXTON?

YES, MR. ULRIC!

'THEN, I CONSTRUCTED A REPLICA OF THE ELECTRIC CHAIR... AND I ALLOWED THEM TO SHOOT THE SAME AMOUNT OF VOLTAGE THROUGH MY BODY THAT ALL CONVICTED KILLERS GET...'

READY, ULRIC?

READY!

'MY SIXTH LIFE SLIPPED AWAY - WITH NEWSREEL CAMERAS GRINDING AND TELEVISION CAMERAS SCANNING THE SPECTACLE AS THEY ELECTROCUTED ME.'

NBC TV

BZZZZZZZZ

AND I REVIVED, IN MY SEVENTH LIFE, NINETY THOUSAND DOLLARS RICHER...'

HERE'S YOUR MONEY, ULRIC. FROM NEWSREEL... AND T.V. RIGHTS... AND ADMISSIONS... AND YOUR SIDE BETS...

THANK YOU!

'AS I SAT ON MY BED COUNTING MY LATEST BANKROLL, THE ATTENDANT I'D HIRED CAME IM WITH A KNIFE IM HIS HAND.'

GIVE ME THAT MONEY, MR. ULRIC.

DON'T BE A FOOL, SAXTON!

'BUT I WAS THE FOOL! I STRUGGLED WITH HIM! THAT WAS A MISTAKE! I WASTED MY SEVENTH LIFE. SAXTON BROUGHT THE KNIFE DOWN INTO MY HEART...'

GGGGHHHHHHH...

ULRIC, THE UNDYING SULPED AT THE LAST TRACES OF OXYGEN IN THE BURIED COFFIN...

SO THIS IS THE *LAST TIME* I CAN *DIE* AND... GASP...*EXPECT TO RETURN!* THIS IS MY *EIGHTN LIFE*...GASP! WHEN I *REVIVE*...GASP...I WILL BE IN MY *HINTH LIFE!* MY *LAST LIFE!* WITH *FINAL* AND-GASP...*ETERNAL DEATH* AT ITS *END*... GASP! BUT...

'...BUT I'M *RICH*, NOW...THANKS TO THAT *POOR CAT*... THAT POOR CAT LYING *DEAD* ON THE *TABLE* NEXT TO ME!'

ULRIC SIGHED, HIS HEAD REELING...

...THAT *POOR CAT* THAT *DIED* SO THAT *I COULD HAVE ITS NINE*... *NINE*...*OH, MY LORD!*

ULRIC, THE UNDYING, SCREAMED

THAT CAT! IT DIED *ONCE!* I ONLY GOT *EIGHT* LIVES FROM IT! *ONLY EIGHT! NO! NO!* *LET ME OUT OF HERE!*

...AS THE LAST TRACE OF OXYGEN VANISHED FROM THE COFFIN BURIED SO DEEP...

THAT'S...CHOKE...*WHY*...*THE*... GASP...COUGH...*DOC*...*LAUGHED!*

EEE AAAGGHHHH!

UP ABOVE, THE LOUDSPEAKER DRONED ON...

HE'S BEEN DOWN THERE OVER AN *HOUR*, FOLKS. HIS *OXYGEN* IS GONE BY NOW...

HEY, ED! DID...DID YOU *HEAR* SOMETHING? A *FAINT SCREAM?*

HUH? AW! MUSTA BEEN A *CAT* YOU HEARD, PHIL.

UNDYING

HEH, HEH, AND THAT'S MY *YELP-YARN*, FIENDS. ULRIC *COUNTED* HIS NINE LIVES VERY *CARE-FULLY*. TROUBLE WAS, HE ONLY HAD *EIGHT* TO *PLAY* WITH. POOR *PUSSY* USED UP *ONE*. WHEN THEY DUG UP ULRIC AT THE END OF THE THREE HOURS, HE WAS *DEAD*, ALL RIGHT, FOR *GOOD, TOD!* NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE OLD WITCH FOR MORE *MEOWS*. AND *LISTEN!* HERE'S A *TIP!* MAKE LIKE YOU'RE *READING HER COLUMN*. IF YOU *DON'T*... HEH, HEH - YOU MAY *ANGORA!* 'BYE...

-THE END-

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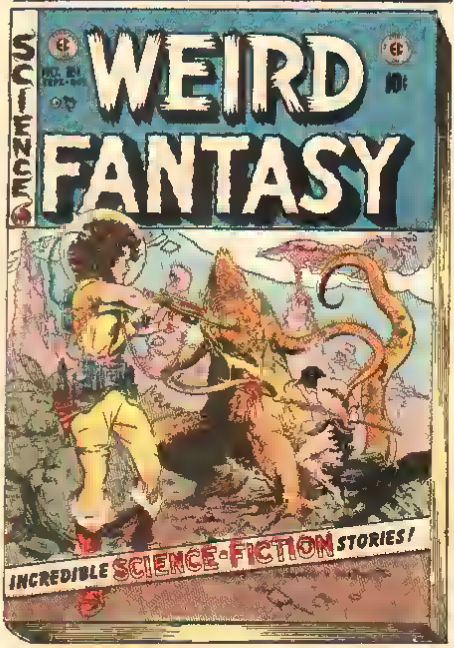

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OUT OF SIGHT!

Ransom crouched in the weeds bordering the lake, watching with fear as the three men came running across the sweeping lawn. *Probably the chauffeur, the caretaker and the handyman,* Ransom thought uneasily. It was obvious, even at this distance, that they were armed; the tall man had a shotgun, the other two carried revolvers. His best chance to get out of sight was to skirt the lake, Ransom realized. Clinging to the protection of the water-edge foliage he might be able to slip into the woods on the other side. His fist tightened unconsciously around the necklace Ransom had just stolen from the estate house. Then he began to move, trying not to disturb the weeds . . . to merge with the greenery edging the lake.

A few yards further on, Ransom saw two large birds floating placidly, their sharp-beaked heads turned toward him. *Swans,* Ransom thought . . . *biggest I've ever seen. Mean eyes, too. Don't like the way they're watching me. Coming this way now!*

Ransom stood silent a moment, warily watching the big birds circle slowly, barely rippling the water as they moved closer. He remembered hearing about the ferocity swans were capable of . . . when aroused, he recalled, they displayed the savagery of wild animals. Those wings were incredibly powerful . . . and their beaks were supposed to have the deadly sharpness of swords . . .

A crash in the underbrush startled Ransom. Sucking his breath into his

lungs, he plunged on through the weeds. *They're just a couple of harmless birds,* he assured himself. *They won't keep ME from getting to the other side of the lake!*

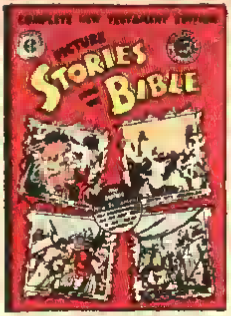
They were uncomfortably close now, their beady eyes riveted on him. With a gasp of anger Ransom picked up a large stone and hurled it . . . heard it *thwunk* against one of the birds. Now they'd get out of his way . . . give him clear passage . . .

In the next instant they were on him, their horrible hissing loud in his ears. He raised an arm to ward off the attack, felt a numbing shock all the way to his shoulder as a ponderous wing slashed at him. With a cry of pain he realized that the arm was paralyzed. Possibly a bone broken in that furious attack . . . or a nerve damaged . . .

He slipped and went down in a cascade of frothing water. When Ransom rose to the surface, gasping for breath, all he could see was a whirl of heavy white feathers and beady, hate-filled eyes. And the long, razor-sharp beaks aimed at his head!

Then an excruciating pain turned everything blood-red before him. His face seemed a raw, open wound . . . his nose, his mouth and eyes seemed aflame with agony. He tried to raise an arm to defend himself, but the stabbing at his face was making him scream like a madman. He felt himself sliding back into the water, his body shaking with fiery spasms as if every nerve was exposed . . . vulnerable . . .

And he was aware of one other thing . . . he couldn't see! Those savage swans . . . their needle-like beaks were being driven with demoniac fury, again and again, into his eyes! Or what was left of them! And Ransom was completely at their mercy . . . !



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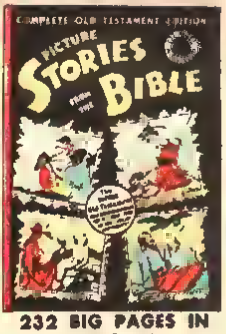

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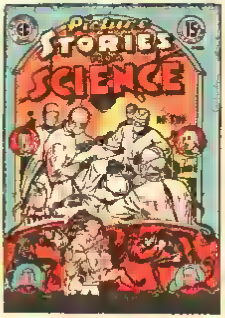

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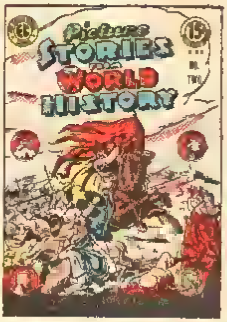

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THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hummmmph! V.K got HIS! Now I'm gettin' MINE! When my mercenary idiot editors get hold of somethin', they NEVER let go! So sit back and suffer through . . . if you haven't already . . . the announcement of their latest insidious money-grabbing scheme . . . namely, the formation of a national E.C. fan organization. O.K., knuckle-noggins . . . crack open the pitch! —O.W.

Thanks ever so much, old girl, for the charming introduction to our happy news. But before launching into the sordid details of the club, we would like to sketch in a little background. We started out with two conditions that positively *had* to be *met*:

1) Our club would have to be a *different* kind of fan club . . . a continuously active club that would provide long-range interest, enjoyment and benefits for its members! And . . .

2) Our club would have to be a *non-profit* fan club! Incredible as it may seem, the only income we at E.C. derive . . . or care to derive! . . . from our efforts comes from the *newsstand sales* of our 10c mags. We actually *lose a little on subscriptions*, and *make very little* on the *annuals* . . . both are primarily offered as services to promote good will! If you readers want a fan club, we're more than happy to oblige . . . but, again, as a *service*, *not* for *profit!*

So here's what we've come up with . . .

1) *THE NAME:* As one reader wrote a while back, "E.C. magazines are habit-forming." So what could be more logical than to call the organization, "THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB"?

2) *THE SET-UP.* The E.C. Fan-Addict Club will consist of the national "parent" organization, and local chapters. Everyone who joins will be a member of the *national* organization. In addition, *any group of five or more* prospective members may join as an *authorized chapter* of the national organization. Each such chapter will be assigned a charter number. The name and address of the elected president of each authorized chapter will be made available to all members, so that those who are *not* already a member of a chapter will be able to join the one nearest them if they wish to.

3) *WHAT YOU GET.* Each member will receive a full-color 7½ by 10½ membership certificate, suitable for framing; a wallet-size membership identification card; a striking membership patch for sweaters, jackets, etc.; and a very distinguished-looking membership pin!

4) *COST OF JOINING.* Membership in THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB will set you back two bits . . . 25c! This 25c represents the exact cost to us (plus or minus a fraction of a cent!) of one *envelope*, one *stamp*, and the above mentioned four items . . . *certificate*, card, patch, and *pin!* (The cost of Ruby's and Nancy's loving labor in packing and mailing is lovingly donated by E.C.)

5) POSSIBLE FUTURE PLANS: We are considering publishing an E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN, containing such features as national and local chapter news; advance inside information on new titles, future stories, and special issues, etc.; articles and stories submitted by members; and a "back-issue trading post!" *Only club members* would be *eligible* to subscribe, *with the price and frequency of publication yet to be decided upon.*

We are also considering some sort of "E.C. Surprise-of-the-Month" plan for members. What the surprises might be, and what we might have to clip you for THIS one, is also as yet undetermined.

6) IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED: For an individual membership, send 25c, along with your clearly printed *name* and address, to:

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
Room 706
225 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

If *five* or more of you wish to join as an *authorized chapter*, enclose each member's name and address, along with 25c for each name, and indicate the name of the elected president. We will notify each *president* of his chapter's *charter number* . . . but each chapter *member* will receive his membership credentials, etc., *individually*.

So that's it! Meet new friends. Make *new* enemies. See the world. Spend *money*. Join THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!!!

(In honor of the occasion, we will forego the usual subscription plug that 6 issues of this, or any other E.C. mag, cost 75c —ed.)

HERE'S A HORROR YARN THAT'S A CORKER!

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN STOOD UPON THE STOOP OF THE OLD BROWNSTONE HOUSE BEFORE THE HUGE GLASS FRONT DOOR WITH ITS INTRICATE BLACK WROUGHT-IRON GRILL WORK. THE WOMAN LIFTED A NERVOUS FINGER TOWARD THE BELL. THE MAN CAUGHT HER HAND IN A FINAL PLEA.

FOR *GOD'S SAKE*, JANET. *FORGET* THIS INSANE IDEA ABOUT *EVIL SPIRITS* AND *WITCHCRAFT* AND *THE OCCULT*. NO PHONY *SWAMI* CAN *HELP YOU*. COME BACK TO THE *OFFICE*... WITH *ME*...

NO, PETER. YOU'VE *HAD* YOUR CHANCE. WE'VE GOTTEN *NOWHERE* WITH *PSYCHIATRY*. YOU'VE PROBED INTO MY *PAST* AND MY *SUBCONSCIOUS* AND *YOU* HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO *HELP* ME. THE *SWAMI* IS MY *ONLY CHANCE, NOW*...

THE MAN LOOKED INTO THE WOMAN'S EYES...

DARLING, THE *ONLY* ONE THAT CAN HELP YOU IS *YOURSELF*. ONCE YOU REALIZE THAT I *LOVE* YOU AND THERE'S *NOTHING* FOR YOU TO BE *ASHAMED* OF, YOU *WON'T WANT* TO DO—TO DO WHAT YOU'VE *TRIED TO DO* SO MANY TIMES...

WE'VE BEEN ALL *THROUGH* THIS, PETER. *PLEASE!* LET ME *GO*...

THE WOMAN PRESSED THE BELL. FOOTSTEPS ECHOED WITHIN. A FIGURE IN AN EMBROIDERED SATIN ROBE WEARING A BEJEWELED TURBAN PEERED THROUGH THE IRON-GRILLED DOOR... SWUNG IT OPEN...

YES? WHAT CAN I *DO* FOR YOU?

YOU MAY NOT *REMEMBER* ME, SWAMI. MY NAME IS *JANET DALY*. THIS IS MY *FIANCÉ*, *DOCTOR PETER RAYMOND*. I USED TO ATTEND YOUR *SEANCES*... *YEARS AGO*...

THE SWAMI STUDIED THE WOMAN. THEN SMILED...

AH, YES! MISS DALY! OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU. YOU WERE, HOW SHALL I SAY IT, A DOUBTER... AN UNBELIEVER... A SKEPTIC...

I WAS SKEPTICAL, SWAMI, YES! BUT NOW, I NEED YOUR HELP...

THE WOMAN BEGAN TO WEEP...

I.. SOB... I HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.. NO ONE ELSE.. SOB.. TO TURN TO...

MISS DALY IS EMOTIONALLY UPSET. FRANKLY I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST IF I TOOK HER...

COME IN, MISS DALY... DOCTOR COME IN!

THE SWAMI LED THE SOBBING WOMAN AND THE DOCTOR INTO A DIMLY LIT ROOM AND BID THEM SEAT THEMSELVES. HE STOOD OVER THEM...

NOW WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?

IT...IT BEGAN ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO. BEFORE THEN, I WAS SERIOUS-MINDED... INTENSE... IN LOVE WITH PETER... AN EMOTIONALLY STABLE PERSON...

'PETER AND I HAD MET IN COLLEGE. HE'D BEEN TAKING A POST GRADUATE COURSE IN PSYCHIATRY, AND I'D BEEN MAJORING IN JOURNALISM. WE FELL IN LOVE.'

...AND WHEN I GET A PRACTICE STARTED, WE CAN BE MARRIED AND SETTLE DOWN IN A PLACE OF OUR OWN... AND HAVE KIDS...

..AND I COULD WORK UNTIL THEN, AND WE'D HAVE SOME MONEY SAVED. OH, DARLING... IT'S GOING TO BE SO WONDERFUL...

AFTER I'D GRADUATED, I'D GOTTEN A JOB ON A NEWSPAPER. PETER, MEANWHILE, CONTINUED WORKING TOWARD HIS DEGREE. WE SAW EACH OTHER OFTEN...'

JUST THINK, BABY. IN ANOTHER WEEK, I GET MY DOCTORATE BUY MYSELF A COUCH.. AND I'M IN BUSINESS.

AND MAYBE, WITH A LITTLE LUCK, WE CAN BE MARRIED SOON...

'THEN, AS I SAID, ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO SOMETHING HAPPENED TO ME. I SUDDENLY FELT TIED-DOWN, BORED, VAPID. I SUDDENLY WANTED PLEASURE, EXCITEMENT, STIMULATION...'

BUT THE CONCERT, JANET! I HAVE TICKETS!

FORGET THE CONCERT, PETER. LET'S GO SOMEPLACE THRILLING TONIGHT. LET'S GO TO A NIGHT CLUB...

'I'D ALWAYS BEEN THE INTELLECTUAL TYPE. THAT'S WHY I'D COME TO YOUR SEANCES. FOR PURELY INTELLECTUAL REASONS. I'D ALWAYS LOVED MUSIC...ART... LITERATURE, BUT SUDDENLY, I REJECTED THOSE THINGS. I REJECTED EVERYTHING GOOD. I SEEKED OUT EVIL.'

KISS ME, DARLING...

JANET! WHAT'S COME OVER YOU LATELY...

PETEN INTERRUPTED JANET'S STORY...
SHE..SHE WAS LIKE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON. SHE WAS SUDDENLY INTERESTED ONLY IN PLEASURE..GOOD-TIMES..WILDNESS. I TRIED TO TALK TO HER...
...AND WHEN PETER OBJECTED ...I EVEN REJECTED HIM. I STARTED GOING OUT WITH OTHER MEN...
...AND THEN..JUST LIKE THAT..ONE MORNING, I WOKE UP TIRED AND SAD AND SOBER AND MOROSE AND I DIDN'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD TIMES. I WANTED TO DIE...'
PETER...SOB..CAN YOU COME OVER QUICKLY? I'M...I'M SICK! I...I...NURRY..PLEASE...
OF COURSE, JANET! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
PETEN SEEAN AGAIN...
WHEN I GOT TO JANET'S PLACE, I FOUND HEN STANDING IN THE KITCHEN WITH A KNIFE IN HER HANDS...
I WAS GOING TO KILL MYSELF, SWAMI. I WANTED TO SLIT MY THROAT. IF IT WEREN'T FON PETER, I'D...I'D...
JANET PUT HEN HEAD IN HER HANDS. PETEN CONTINUED...
SHE'S ATTEMPTED TO KILL HERSELF SEVERAL TIMES SINCE TNEN. I'VE TRIED TO NELP HER BUT SHE REFUSES TO BE HELPED. I'VE EVEN TRIED PSYCHO-THERAPY...TO GET AT THE BASIC CAUSE OF THIS COMPULSION FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION...
IT ISN'T IN MY MIND, SWAMI. I KNOW IT. THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE OF ME..FORCING ME TO TRY TO DESTROY MYSELF. THAT'S WHY I'VE COME TO YOU!
SHE TALKS WILDLY. SHE TALKS OF DEMONS AND WITCHERY AND NON-SENSE LIKE THAT!
IT ISN'T NON-SENSE, DOCTOR RAYMOND!
I'M BE-WITCHED, SWAMI. I KNOW IT!
THERE'S A VOICE INSIDE OF ME. IT KEEPS TELLING ME, 'KILL YOURSELF.. DESTROY YOUR-SELF...' SOB...SOB...
YOUR FRIEND IS POSSESSED BY A LAMIA, DOCTOR RAYMOND...
A...A WHAT?
A LAMIA...AN EVIL SPIRIT...AN ESSENCE OF POLLUTION AND DEGREDATION... A SUPER-NATURAL MALFEASANT... IN OTHER WORDS, A DEVIL...
3

PETER SCOFFED...
RIDICULOUS. THERE'S NO SUCH THING! IT DOESN'T EXIST!
AH, BUT YOU'RE WRONG, DOCTOR RAYMOND. THE LAMIA EXISTS... IN MANY FORMS..
LAMIAS ARE SPIRITS OF EVIL. THEY ARE THE CAUSES OF ALL WICKEDNESS IN THE WORLD. ONCE A LAMIA ENTERS A BODY.. IT POSSESSES IT.. DRIVES IT INTO EVIL!
JANET'S PROBLEM IS MENTAL. I WILL NOT LISTEN TO SUCH HOGWASH...
BUT.. ALAS.. THE LAMIA IS A FICKLE SPIRIT! IT SOON TIRES OF THE BODY IT HAS POSSESSED! IT SEEKS TO ESCAPE IT! BUT ONCE A LAMIA IS INSIDE A BODY... IT CANNOT ESCAPE! IT IS TRAPPED! IT'S ONLY ESCAPE LIES IN THE BODY'S DESTRUCTION.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO KILL MYSELF! DON'T YOU SEE, PETER?
JANET! I WILL NOT LISTEN TO ANY MORE OF THIS THIS DRIVEL..
THE BODY IS LIKE A BOTTLE, IN WHICH THE LAMIA, LIKE A GENIE FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS, IS CORKED. AND LIKE A BOTTLE, THE BODY MUST BE SMASHED OR BROKEN OR RENT IN ORDER FOR THE LAMIA TO ESCAPE...
THINK OF THE LAMIA-POSSESSED PEOPLE THAT LEAP FROM TALL BUILDINGS AND SPLATTER THEMSELVES UPON THE CONCRETE. THINK OF THE ACCIDENT-PRONE PEOPLE THAT SMASH THEIR CARS AND THEIR BODIES INTO TREES, INTO OTHER CARS, AND INTO BRICK WALLS...
THINK OF THE LAMIA-POSSESSED WHO LIFT GUNS TO THEIR TEMPLES... KNIVES TO THEIR BREASTS.. RAZORS TO THEIR WRISTS...
PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCIDENT-PRONE OR HAVE SUICIDAL-TENDENCIES ARE TRYING TO PUNISH THEMSELVES BECAUSE OF SOME GUILT-COMPLEX. SOMETHING THEY ARE ASHAMED OF
NO! IT IS THE LAMIA, DOCTOR
IT ESCAPES THROUGH THE BULLET HOLE.. THE SLASHED WRIST THE SLIT THROAT. THE ACCIDENT-LACERATED BODY. IT ESCAPES BECAUSE IT IS BORED. IT ESCAPES AND ENTERS ANOTHER BODY...
COME ON, JANET! YOU'RE GOING HOME!
WAIT, PETER! WAIT! SWAMI, CAN YOU HELP ME? CAN YOU TAKE MY LAMIA FROM ME BEFORE IT DESTROYS ME?
IT IS ALL ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF LAMIA THAT POSSESSES YOU. MISS DALY THERE ARE WAYS, BUT THEY ARE COSTLY...
HA!
4

PETER SNATCHED JANET'S HAND, PULLING HER FROM THE ROOM...
HA! THERE! YOU SEE! IT WILL BE COSTLY! THAT'S ALL HE'S INTERESTED IN! MONEY! YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE!
PETER! PLEASE! NO! SOB... NO!
THE SWAMI CALLED AFTER JANET...
SIX MONTHS AGO, MISS DALY! THINK! WHAT VIOLENT DEATH DID YOU WITNESS SIX MONTHS AGO? WHEN COULD THE LAMIA HAVE ENTERED YOUR BODY? WHAT DID YOU SEE? WHAT DEATH WERE YOU NEAR?
PETER HESITATED. THERE WAS A MOMENT OF SILENCE. JANET GASPED...
OF COURSE! I WAS SENT UPSTATE... TO THE PRISON... TO COVER A HANGING... FOR THE PAPER!
A HANGING, MISS DALY? NO! I HARDLY THINK SO...
YOU SEE, A HANGING DOESN'T RUPTURE THE BODY. DOESN'T 'OPEN' A 'DOOR' FOR THE LAMIA TO ESCAPE..
THIS.. CHOKE .. THIS HANGING DID! THE CONVICTED KILLER WAS A HUGE MAN... OVERWEIGHT..
'...WHEN THE TRAP SPRUNG, HIS BODY PLUNGED DOWNWARD, AND THE ROPE... TORE HIS HEAD OFF.'
THE SWAMI TURNED WHITE...
A... A DECAPITATION LAMIA.
NO! OH, LORD...
JANET! FOR GOD'S SAKE... STOP THIS AND COME...
THE SWAMI SWORE
DOCTOR RAYMOND! THIS IS SERIOUS! THE DECAPITATION LAMIA IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REMOVE. IT WILL ONLY EXIT THROUGH THE 'NECK' OF THE 'BOTTLE'... BY UNCORKING IT!
JANET! COME BACK!
3

JANET SWUNG OPEN THE HUGE GRILL-DOOR AND STUMBLED DOWN THE STEPS OF THE OLD BROWN-STONE HOUSE...

JANET!

PETER TORE AFTER HER AS SHE RAN WILDLY UP THE BLOCK...

BLASTED SWAMI... FILLING HER SICK MIND WITH SUCH ROT

THE SUBWAY KIOSK LOOMED UP BEFORE THE WIDE-EYED TERRORIZED WOMAN..

JANET! NO! STOP HER! SOMEONE..

SUBWAY

SHE DARTED DOWN THE STEPS... INTO THE ROARING DARKNESS... PETER CLOSE BEHIND HER...

JANET! COME BACK!

NO! NO!

THE STATION WAS ALMOST DESERTED. LIGHTS SWEPT DOWN THE GLEAMING STEEL RAILS... INTO THE EMPTY STATION. A TRAIN WAS COMING. JANET FLAILED AT THE PLATFORM EDGE. HER SCREAM ECHOED OFF TILED WALLS AS SHE FELL...

PETER WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS THE KNIFE-LIKE WHEELS OF THE SUBWAY TRAIN PASSED OVER JANET'S NECK, *SEVERING HER HEAD FROM HER BODY...*

OH.. GOD...

...LIKE AN *UNCORKING*... LIKE AN *OPENING* OF A BOTTLE OF BUR-GUNDY. THE RED WINE FOUNTAINING. AND THEN THE MIST RISING... AND COMING TOWARD PETER.

JANET! MY... SOB... MY... *JANET...*

..AND THEN THE SUDDEN STRANGE FEELING DEEP INSIDE PETER. THE GIDDYNESS AND DELIGHT. BURSTING OUT INTO LAUGHTER.

HAH-HEH-HA-HA

..AND THE BEGINNING OF AN IDIOTIC EVIL ENJOYMENT THAT WOULD ONLY END IN BOREDOM AND THE *UNCORKING* ONCE AGAIN...

THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

HEH, HEH! IT'S SO *NICE* TO SEE YOUR *PUTRID PUSSES* AGAIN, *CREEPS*, PEERING INTO *THE VAULT*. WELL, YOUR *HAPPY HOST IN HOWLS, THE VAULT-KEEPER* (THAT'S *ME*, IN THE *LIVID FLESH*) IS READY TO RELATE ANOTHER *REVOLTING TALE* FROM MY *APPETIZING ASSORTMENT*. SO, *COME IN*... CURL UP ON THAT *DISSECTION TABLE THERE*, AND I'LL *BEGIN* THE *SCREAM-STORY* I CALL...

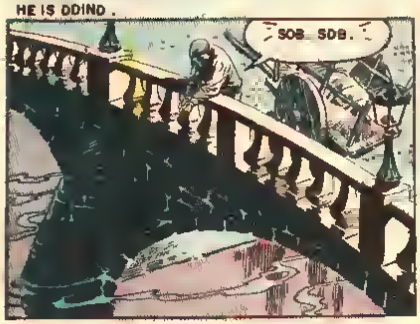
The HIGH COST of DYING!

OUR STORY BEGINS IN PARIS ON A SWELTERING SUMMER NIGHT IN 1967. A CART RATTLES THROUGH DESERTED COBBLE-STONED STREETS .. PAST DARKENED STORES AND SHUTTERED HOUSES .. DOWN WINDING ALLEYS ALIVE WITH SCAMPERING GREY SHADOWS. .AND FINALLY UP ONTO ONE OF THE COUNTLESS BRIDGES THAT SPAN THE RIVER *SEINE*. THE SHABBILY DRESSED FIGURE, PULLING THE NOISY CART, GASPS AND STRAINS AS HE LABORS UP THE INCLINE OF THE BRIDGE TOWARD ITS CENTER. HIS TORN AND SHREDDED SHIRT IS WET WITH PERSPIRATION, AND HIS GRIMY FACE IS STREAKED BY THE TEARS THAT FILL HIS EYES AND OVERFLOW THEIR LIDS...

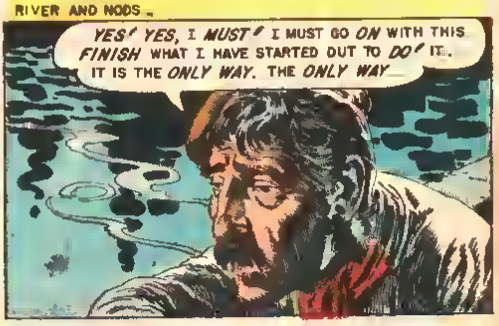
R CRANDALL

HIS NAME IS HENRI COURSET. HE STOPS NOW, RESTING.. WIPING HIS WET EYES WITH THE BACK OF HIS HUGE HAND. HE TURNS AND GLANCES BEHIND HIM .. AT THE CART.. AT THE BODY LYING UPON IT, WRAPPED IN BURLAP, LYING STILL AND SILENT AND NEVERMORE TO MOVE OR LAUGH OR TALK OR CRY, AS NOW HENRY IS CRYING...

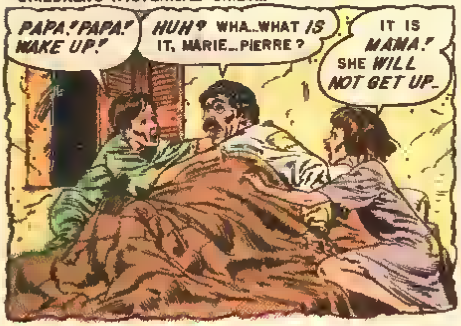
FOR A WHILE, HENRI STARES DOWN AT THE MUDDY FOG-BLANKETED RIVER, SHAKING HIS HEAD, HATING HIMSELF FOR THIS...THIS HORRIBLE THING THAT HE IS DOING.



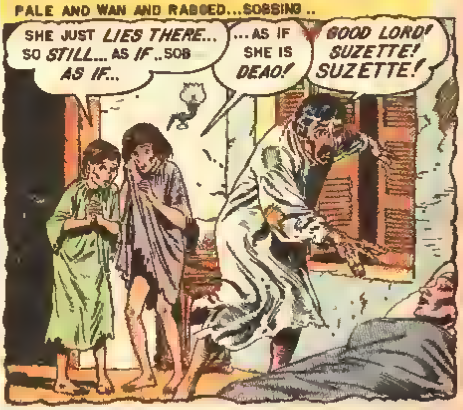
BUT SOMETIMES A MAN IS FORCED TO DO THINGS THAT ARE HATEFUL AND REVOLTING TO HIM. SOMETIMES, HE CANNOT HELP HIMSELF. HENRI STARES DOWN AT THE SLOW MURKY RIVER AND NODS..



THE RIVER BELOW THE BRIDGE FLOWS ON.. LIKE TIME CEASELESSLY.. UNENDING.. NEVER COMING BACK. GOING DOWNSTREAM INTO THE PAST... LOST FOREVER. HENRI GAZES DOWNSTREAM INTO THE FOG.. INTO THE PAST. AND HE SEES HIMSELF WAKING THAT MORNING TO THE CHILDREN'S HYSTERICAL CRIES...



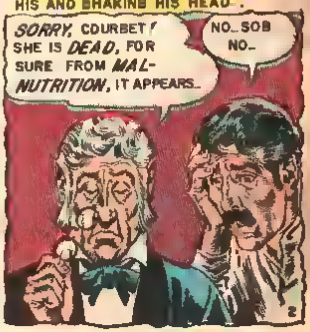
HENRI SEES IT ALL SO CLEARLY... HIS HUNGRY CHILDREN, PALE AND WAN AND RAGGED...SOBBING..



AND HE REMEMBERS HOW HE HAD LEAPED FROM HIS STRAW COT AND RUSHED TO HIS WIFE'S SIDE.. TO SUZETTE...BEAUTIFUL, SILENT SUZETTE.

HE REMEMBERS SENDING THE BOY, PIERRE.

HE REMEMBERS DOCTOR LE DUCART COMING TO THE SQUALID CELLAR-APARTMENT AND PUTTING DOWN HIS LITTLE BLACK BAG AND TAKING SUZETTE'S LIMP WHITE HAND IN HIS AND SHAKING HIS HEAD.



HENRI REMEMBERS DOCTOR LE DUCART LOOKING AT HIM..
COULDN'T YOU AFFORD TO BUY FOOD, COURBET?
WE.. WE HAVE NO MONEY! I.. I HAVE NOT HAD WORK FOR SOME TIME..
SUZETTE.. SHE SHE GAVE HER SHARE TO THE CHILDREN!
HMMM! A PITY! WELL BETTER TAKE CARE OF THE FUNERAL RIGHT AWAY, COURBET! REMEMBER THE NEW ORDINANCE!
NEW ORDINANCE? WHICH ONE IS THAT? THERE ARE SO MANY THESE DAYS!
THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH'S LATEST DECREE. ALL BODIES MUST BE BURIED WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER DEATH. YOU HAVE UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING. GOOD-DAY!
AND HENRI REMEMBERS GOING TO THE UNDERTAKER PARLOR AND INQUIRING...
WELL, LET US SEE. THERE IS THE PLOT.. AND THE COFFIN.. AND CARTAGE...
THE CHEAPEST I CAN MAKE IT IS FIFTY-FIVE FRANCS, M'SIEU COURBET!
FIFTY-FIVE... GULP...
ANYTHING WRONG, COURBET?
I.. I DO NOT HAVE FIFTY-FIVE FRANCS NOW, M'SIEU GREVIARD IF I COULD OWE IT TO YOU..?
M'SIEU GREVIARD, THE UNDERTAKER, SHOOK HIS HEAD..
NO, NO! M'SIEU COURBET! I DO NOT DO BUSINESS THAT WAY. NO MONEY! NO FUNERAL! WHAT IF YOU NEVER PAID ME? WHAT COULD I DO? GO DIG UP THE BODY!?
I WOULD PAY YOU! I SWEAR IT!
SORRY, M'SIEU! FIFTY-FIVE FRANCS IS THE PRICE! AND REMEMBER THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH'S DECREE. TWENTY-FOUR HOURS..
YES! YES! I WILL REMEMBER!

THE RIVER BELOW SWEEPS SLOWLY BY... AS THE PAST DAY'S EVENTS SWEEP SLOWLY BY. HENRI STARES INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS AND SEES HIS HOPELESS VAIN ATTEMPTS TO RAISE THE MONEY...
BUT YOU ARE MY LIFE-LONG FRIEND, LOUIS! MY WIFE IS DEAD. I MUST BURY HER...
I AM SORRY, HENRI. TIMES ARE BAD. JOBS ARE SCANCE. I HAVEN'T ENOUGH TO FEED MY OWN FAMILY... NO LESS BURY ONE OF YOURS...
BOULETS
...FINALLY GOES BACK TO THE HOVEL THAT SERVED AS THEIR HOME, AND SEEING THE CHILDREN'S HUNGRY FACES AND HIS WIFE'S SILENT STILL BODY...
WE ...WE HAVE EATEN NOTHING ALL DAY, PAPA!
WE ..WE'RE SOB... HUNGRY, PAPA!
AND I...I HAVEN'T THE MONEY TO BURY YOUR POOR DEAD MAMA, NO LESS CHOKE...NO LESS FEED YOU...
...THE SUDDEN HEAVY KNOCKING ON THE FRONT DOOR.
WHO WHO'S TNERE?
OPEN UP.. IN THE NAME OF THE COMMISSIONER OF NEALTH...
...THE OFFICER, LOOMING IN THE DOORWAY.. HIS EVIL EYES FLASHING.. HIS GRIM MOUTH SNEERING..
YOU ARE HENRI COUNBEY...
YES! THAT IS ME...
THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH HAS RECEIVED WORD FROM YOUR DOCTOR THAT YOUR WIFE PASSED AWAY THIS MORRING.
YES... THAT... THAT IS TRUE..
IT IS MY OUTY TO INFONM YOU THAT IR ACCORDANCE WITH ORDINANCE 4956, IF SHE IS NOT PNOPENLY BUNIED BY A LICENSED UNOER-TAKER BY TOMONROW MONNING, HER BODY WILL BE NEMOVED FROM THE PREMISES AND TURNED OVER TO THE PARIS CONSENVATORY OF MEDICINE...
THE... THE CONSENVA-TORY OF MEDICINE!
...FOR THE EDIFICATION AND EXPERI-MENTATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS ENROLLED THERE, BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONEN OF HEALTN, CITY OF PARIS, JULY 13, 1867.
NO! NO! OH, LORD...

THE OFFICER LEERED AT HENRI.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT *THAT* MEANS, M'SIEU COURBET? IT MEANS THAT IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO *BURY* YOUR WIFE, HER *BODY* IS TURNED OVER TO *MEDICAL STUDENTS* FOR *DISSECTION!*

IT ISN'T *FAIR!* OH, *GOD!* IT ISN'T *FAIR,* THERE ISN'T ENOUGH *TIME!*

HE SNEERED.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT MEDICAL STUDENTS *DO* TO BODIES, M'SIEU COURBET? THEY TAKE *SHARP LITTLE SCALPELS*... AND THEY CUT THEM *OPEN* AND TAKE OUT THE *INSIDES* AND CUT *THEM* OPEN...

PIECE BY *PIECE*... *INCH* BY *INCH*.. THEY *PROBE* AND *SLICE* AND *CUT* AND *STUDY* AND *CUT SOME MORE*..

.. AND DO YOU KNOW *WHY* THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH *ISSUED* THIS DECREE, M'SIEU COURBET. *NOT* IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CITY'S *HEALTH!* HE GETS *SEVENTY-FIVE FRANCS FOR EACH BODY*.. FROM THE *CONSERVATORY*.. WHICH HE *POCKETS!*

STOP IT! *STOP IT!* HAVE *PITY!*

THE OFFICER LOOKED AROUND. HE LOOKED AT SUZETTE'S STILL WHITE FORM...

SHE IS *YOUNG* AND *PRETTY*. THE MEDICAL STUDENTS WILL *ESPECIALLY* WELCOME *HER* BODY SO I SUGGEST YOU *RAISE* THE MONEY, M'SIEU... *QUICKLY*. *BURY HER!*

I... CHOKE... I *CANNOT!* I HAVE *TRIED!* I CANNOT EVEN BUY *FOOD* FOR THE *CHILDREN!*

THE OFFICER LOOKED AT THE POVERTY AND SQUALOR AT THE PALE THIN STARVING CHILDREN WHO STARED AT HIM WITH WIDE FRIGHTENED EYES.

THEN DON'T BE A *FOOL*, COURBET *TAKE* HER TO THE CONSERVATORY *YOURSELF*.. *TONIGHT!* LINE YOUR *OWN* POCKETS WITH THE *SEVENTY-FIVE FRANCS!* AT LEAST YOU WILL BE ABLE TO *FEED YOUR CHILDREN*...

KNOWING WHAT THEY WILL *DO* TO SUZETTE SOB. HOW *CAN I?*

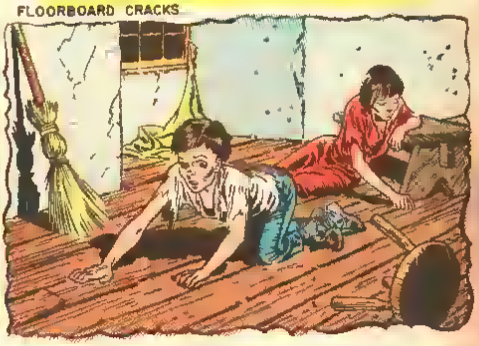
THE OFFICER TURNED TO GO. HE SHRUGGED.

SHE IS *DEAD*, M'SIEU. *SHE* WILL NEVER *KNOW!* GOOD-EVENING! TILL TOMORROW... THEN...

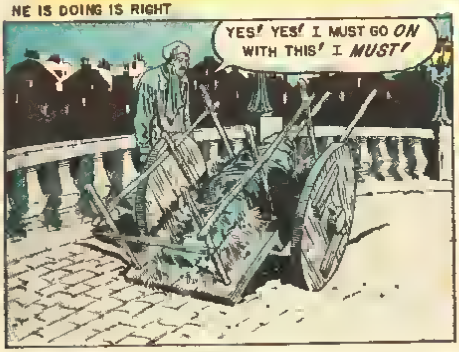
TILL TOMORROW...

HENRI STARES DOWN AT THE RIVER. HE THINKS OF THE MEDICAL STUDENTS. GATHERED AROUND THE BODY. THEIR SHINING SCALPELS IN THEIR UPRAISED HANDS... THEIR GRINNING FACES...

AND THEN HE THINKS OF THE CHILDREN...MARIÉ AND PIERRE...THEIR BLOATED STOMACHS CRYING FOR FOOD... THEIR BONY FINGERS SEARCHING FOR CRUMBS IN THE FLOORBOARD CRACKS...



AND THEN HE LOOKS AT THE BODY WRAPPED IN BURLAP LYING ON THE OLD CART, AND HE KNOWS THAT WHAT HE IS DOING IS RIGHT



THE CART RUMBLES DOWN AND OFF THE BRIDGE, THE STIFF BODY BOUNCING UPON IT...

...RUMBLES ON THROUGH COBBLE-STONED STREETS, DOWN WINDING ALLEYS, TOWARD *THE PARIS CONSERVATORY OF MEDICINE*...

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH IN ANSWER TO HENRI'S FRANTIC KNOCK. THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. A FACE PEERS OUT

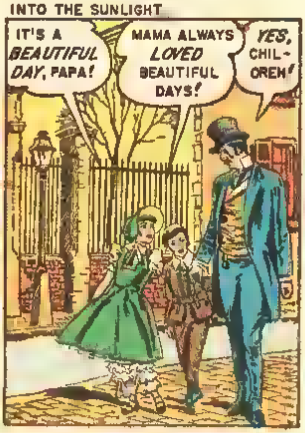
THE DOOR SWINGS WIDE. A SHAFT OF LIGHT KNIFES INTO THE FOGGY SUMMER NIGHT, FALLING ACROSS THE BURLAP-WRAPPED FORM

THE OLD MAN HOBBLES OUT INTO THE NIGHT...OUT TO THE CART...LIFTS THE BURLAP COVER AND PEEPS AT THE STILL WHITE FACE...

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, PIERRE AND MARIE ATE HEARTILY.. THE FIRST GOOD FOOD THEY'D HAD IN MONTHS

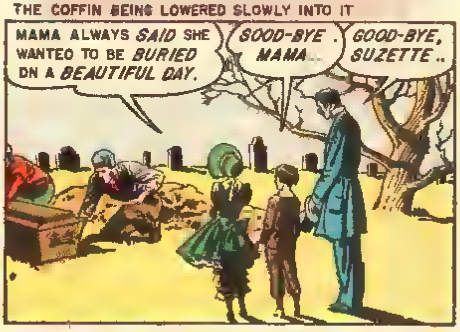
AND THEY DRESSED IN THEIR NEW CLOTHES.. THE CLOTHES HENRI HAD BOUGHT WITH PART OF THE SEVENTY-FIVE FRANCS

..AND, TOGETHER, THEY WALKED OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT



AT EXACTLY THAT MOMENT, IN *THE PARIS CONSERVATORY OF MEDICINE*, EAGER CURIOUS PROSPECTIVE DOCTORS CUT AND SLICED AND PROBED THE NEW BODY THAT HAD ARRIVED THAT NIGHT...

AND LATER, JUST OUTSIDE PARIS, HENRI AND THE CHILDREN STOOD BEFORE THE GAPING OPEN GRAVE, WATCHING THE COFFIN BEING LOWERED SLOWLY INTO IT



WHILE AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT, THE DEAN OF *THE PARIS CONSERVATORY OF MEDICINE*, ON HIS DAILY TOUR OF THE ANATOMY CLASSES, STOPPED BEFORE THE NEWLY PURCHASED BODY THAT NOW LAY COMPLETELY DISSECTED...AND SHRIEKED...

HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S MY *YELP-YARN*, FIENDS! HENRI TOOK A *WALK* THAT NIGHT TO TRY AND DECIDE WHAT TO *DO*.. AND THE *SOLUTION*, SHALL WE SAY, *DROPPED* INTO HIS LAP OF COURSE, HE HAD TO *COAX* THE COMMISSIONER TO *DROP* (DEAD, THAT IS) BY... WELL .. I'LL *SPARE* YOU THE *GORY DETAILS*. JUST USE YOUR LIL' OL' *IMAGINATIONS*. AND NOW IT'S TIME TO *CLOSE* THE DOOR OF THE *VAULT* TILL *NEXT* WE MEET.. WHICH WILL BE IN *THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG-TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. TILL THEN... AS THE *UNDERTAKERS SAY*.. 'HAVE A *NICE MOURNING!*'

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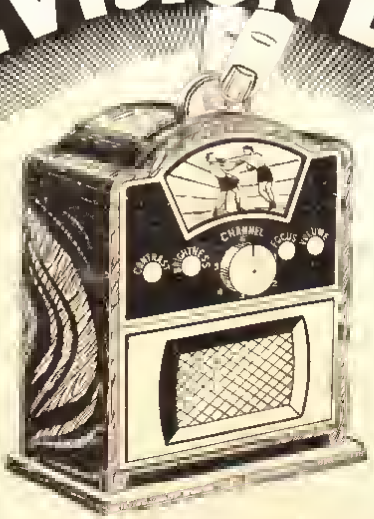

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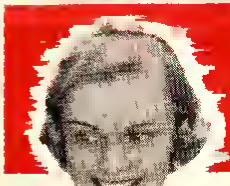

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Mrs. Emery Shools, Wyo **$48.66 first week spare time**

Mr. J. Hillman Jr., Ohio **$46.72 first week spare time**

Mrs. John Gorman, Conn **$71.54 first week spare time**

Mr. W. Riley, Ill. **$72.72 first week spare time**

Miss Frances Freeman, Texas **$62.73 first week spare time**

NO HOUSE-TO-HOUSE CANVASSING REQUIRED

Our unusual plan is a sure fire money maker! Sensational Guarantee is creating a tremendous demand for Wil-knit Nylons! Mrs Nellie Gail of Iowa started out with me and made $48.89 the very first week in just her spare hours. Mrs. Agnes McCall of South Carolina, did even better. Her spare time in her very first week brought her earnings of $95.56. Mrs. Walter Simmons of New York turned her spare time into earnings of $92.82 her first week out. THESE EXCEPTIONAL EARNINGS FOR JUST SPARE TIME and in the very first week give you an idea of the possibilities!

A CAR IN 4 MONTHS—AND UP TO $20 IN A HALF DAY

"I cannot express my thrill upon receiving this beautiful new Chevrolet. I was a bit doubtful at first but now it is a reality and I thank you for making it so. I have earned this car in just four short months and I'm sure others can do the same. Thank you for making it possible for me to earn more money than ever before. I have earned as much as twenty dollars for one half day and my bonus alone for one month was $125.00. —*Mrs. E. A. Conway*

GUARANTEED AGAINST Runs, Wear and Even Snags!

Why is it so easy for Wil-knit Salespeople to get orders? I'll tell you—It's because we stand back of Wil-knit Nylons with the most amazing guarantee you have ever heard of. Your customers can wear out their hose. They can develop runs. They can even snag them. No matter what happens to make Wil-knit Nylons unwearable within 9 months, depending on quantity, **we replace them free of charge under terms of our guarantee.** No wonder women are anxious to buy Wil-knit! And no wonder it is easy to quickly build up a fine and STEADY year around income. Earnings start immediately. Look at these exceptional figures—Lillian A. Bronson of Georgia made $80.60 first week spare time. Ethel Cameron of Michigan $64.14. Sabine Fisher, New York, reports earnings of $70.10 under our unusual plan just for spare time in her first week. Mrs. Edward Leo of Minn. in writing to thank us for the new Plymouth she received, also reports "I actually earned $12.00 in twenty minutes by the clock. I actually couldn't believe I earned that much until I re-checked my figures."

NEW CAR GIVEN—OR IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A CAR YOU CAN GET A NEW ONE ON OUR "TRADE-IN" PLAN

WIL-KNIT actually gives new Fords, Plymouths or Chevrolets to producers as a bonus **in addition to your regular earnings.** If in yours Or if you now have a car you can get a new one even quicker under our trade-in plan without paying a penny. Get the facts TODAY.

SEND NO MONEY!

JUST NAME AND HOSE SIZE...

SIMPLY MAIL COUPON. When you send for Selling Outfit I also send your choice of Nylons or Socks for your personal use. Just rush your name for the facts about the most sensational line of hosiery for men, women and children ever offered. Your friends and neighbors will admire you and this unusual selection of most beautiful hosiery! And mail coupon or postal card now, and learn at once how you too, can earn big money in FULL or SPARE TIME and qualify for an EXTRA BONUS and a New Car over and above your cash earnings.

L. Lowell Wilkin

WIL-KNIT HOSIERY CO., Inc., A-6138 Midway, Greenfield, Ohio

L. Lowell Wilkin, WIL-KNIT HOSIERY CO., Inc. ***Be Sure to Send Hose Size***
A-6138 Midway, GREENFIELD, OHIO

Please rush all facts about your guaranteed hosiery money-making plan and NEW CAR offer. Everything you send me now is FREE.

MY HOSE SIZE IS_____ MY AGE IS _____ YEARS

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY _____ ZONE_____ STATE _____